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Sustainable development: protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind; implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa; Convention on Biological Diversity

Implementation of United Nations environmental conventions

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the reports submitted by the secretariats of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (annex I), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (annex II), and the Convention on Biological Diversity (annex III).

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Annex I

Report of the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change on the United Nations Climate Change Conference, Nairobi, 2006, and its follow-up

I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 61/201 of 20 December 2006, invited the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to report to it at its sixty-second session on the work of the Conference of the Parties. The present report is submitted in response to that invitation.

II. Outcomes of the twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and of the second session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol

A. Summary

2. The United Nations Climate Change Conference was held in Nairobi from 6 to 17 November 2006. It included the twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the second session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol.

3. Overall, the United Nations Climate Change Conference achieved good results in a broad range of areas of international cooperation on climate change, particularly with respect to issues of importance to developing countries.

4. A major outcome of the conference was the progress made in advancing the adaptation agenda. Agreement on the Nairobi work programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change (see FCCC/SBSTA/2006/11, sect. III) under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,[a] and on the principles, modalities and key governance elements of the Adaptation Fund under the Kyoto Protocol, provide a critical foundation to enhance the technical basis of adaptation and advance the implementation of activities on the ground.

5. The Secretary-General of the United Nations launched the Nairobi Framework, a collaborative effort by several agencies to build capacity in those developing countries that are not yet able to access the clean development mechanism.

6. The United Nations Climate Change Conference has succeeded in maintaining the momentum of the two processes launched in Montreal last year that will shape future climate change policy. The Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments by Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol, agreed on a detailed workplan spelling out the steps needed to complete its mandate. Under the broader Convention

[a] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.

dialogue on long-term cooperative action to address climate change, a second workshop was held, which focused on approaches to advancing development goals in a sustainable way and realizing the full potential of market-based opportunities.

7. As at 30 July 2007, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change had 191 parties, and the Kyoto Protocol had 175 Parties (as at 30 July 2007).

B. Outcomes of the second session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol

8. The second session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol adopted 11 decisions, strengthening implementation of the Kyoto Protocol and building the basis for future climate change policy.

9. An important outcome was reached in the area of adaptation. The agreement reached on the principles, modalities and key governance elements of the Adaptation Fund under the Kyoto Protocol will lay the ground for operationalization of the Adaptation Fund in 2007. The Adaptation Fund is an innovative instrument for supporting activities in developing countries as it draws on shares of proceeds of certified emission reductions generated by clean development mechanism project activities and does not rely only on concessional funds. It will support concrete adaptation activities in developing countries.

10. In Nairobi, a number of decisions were made with respect to Kyoto Protocol market-based mechanisms. In particular, joint implementation was given a major boost by decisions needed to launch its project-based track. As provided under the clean development mechanism, project proposals for emission-reducing activities can now be submitted to a supervisory committee and, if approved, will generate carbon credits.

11. Progress was made on some key methodological issues related to the mechanism, which will help pave the way for eventual consideration of new approaches to expand its scope in the future. Those issues include the treatment of new and emerging technologies, such as the capture of carbon dioxide and its storage in underground geological formations, and the so-called "programmatic clean development mechanism", whereby the mechanism is no longer limited to individual projects but can cover entire national programmes that help reduce emissions.

12. According to the workplan of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments by Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol, the group agreed to base its efforts on a shared vision of the challenge set by the ultimate objective of the Convention and took note of findings that global carbon dioxide emissions had to be reduced to well below half of their levels in the year 2000 to achieve a stabilization of atmospheric concentrations. It also referred to the need to pursue its work in a timely manner in order to send a signal to economic actors on the continuity of the international carbon market.

13. Agreement on the review of the Kyoto Protocol under its article 9 adds to the future momentum of the international climate change regime. A first, light review done in Nairobi concluded that the Kyoto Protocol had initiated important action to address climate change and had fostered cooperative action between developed and

developing countries, but that some elements, in particular adaptation, could be further elaborated. The second review of the Protocol will take place in 2008, with preparations starting this year.

C. Outcomes of the twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention

14. The nine formal decisions adopted by the twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, some of which are outlined below, will further advance measures to mitigate climate change and to adapt to its impacts.

15. The Nairobi work programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change was agreed upon. The work programme provides a unique tool to enhance the technical and methodological basis for adaptation and to foster cooperation among parties as well as joint activities with other United Nations entities and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. It brings together many actors from the United Nations system (including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, the Inter-Agency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, the United Nations University, the World Food Programme, the World Meteorological Organization, the World Trade Organization and the regional commissions) to promote adaptation activities, to incorporate adaptation into all relevant policy areas and to foster assistance to developing countries in line with their needs.

16. Substantial advances have also been made on other efforts under the Convention aimed at providing to developing countries the financial resources required to address climate change. The full operationalization of the Special Climate Change Fund, which is designed to finance projects in developing countries relating to adaptation, technology transfer, climate change mitigation and support for economic diversification, is another critical outcome of the twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties.

17. Other decisions adopted aim at improving the delivery of financial support, in particular, the way in which the Global Environment Facility (GEF) operates the Convention's financial mechanism.

18. In order to ensure that adequate financial and investment flows will become available to support the required response to climate change, the Conference of the Parties requested the secretariat to prepare a review of all investment and financial flows relevant to addressing climate change, with a particular focus on developing countries' needs. That work is led by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and has been undertaken in collaboration with a number of international financial institutions, the Global Environment Facility, representatives of the private sector and civil society and a number of United Nations entities, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Forum on Forests, the Department of

Economic and Social Affairs and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

19. Under the Convention dialogue on long-term cooperative action to address climate change, a second workshop was held. It included presentations on the economics of climate change by Nicolas Stern and on the investment framework for cleaner energy and development by the World Bank. Discussions showed a clear shift in the debate, from looking at climate change policies as a cost factor for development to seeing them as opportunities to enhance economic growth in a sustainable way.

20. The implementation of the Convention continues, with 134 developing countries having submitted their initial national communications (as at 30 July 2007). Of those countries, more than 100 are presently engaged in the preparation of their second national communication that will contain information relating to greenhouse gas inventories, vulnerability and adaptation assessments, and mitigation measures. Of the least developed countries, 20 have prepared national adaptation programmes of action that identify priority activities that respond to their urgent and immediate needs with regard to adaptation to climate change (as at 31 July 2007).

21. Industrialized countries (annex I parties) were requested to submit their fourth national communication to the secretariat by 1 January 2006. A total of 39 out of 41 annex I parties have submitted their fourth national communication (as at 30 July 2007).

D. High-level segment

22. The joint high-level segment of the Conference of the Parties at its twelfth session and the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol at its second session was opened by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and by Mwai Kibaki, President of Kenya and Moritz Leuenberger, President of Switzerland. The speakers reinforced the message of the seriousness of the issues at stake, in particular emphasizing the link between climate change and the ability to meet the Millennium Development Goals and calling for an urgent global response to climate change.

23. The Secretary-General of the United Nations commended the progress achieved in implementation of the market-based mechanism of the Kyoto Protocol, but noted that the clean development mechanism is not reaching all developing countries equally, in particular sub-Saharan Africa. To address the problem, he announced the launch of the Nairobi Framework, a collaborative effort by several entities (UNDP, UNEP, the secretariat of the Convention, the World Bank and the African Development Bank) to build capacity in those developing countries that are not yet able to access the clean development mechanism.

E. Conclusions and recommendations

24. **The General Assembly may wish to, inter alia:**

(a) **Take note of the report of the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, as transmitted by the Secretary-General;**

(b) **Note the outcomes of the twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and of the second session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, hosted by the Government of Kenya from 6 November to 17 November 2006;**

(c) **Invite the Executive Secretary to continue to report to it on the work of the Conference.**

Annex II

Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa and on the outcome of the celebration of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 61/202 of 20 December 2006, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its sixty-second session on the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa.[a] The present report constitutes an update to the Assembly on principal activities that have been undertaken under the Convention since the adoption of that resolution, including the outcomes of the fifth session for the review of the implementation of the Convention.

2. The report also reviews activities carried out in the context of resolution 58/211 on the celebration by the international community of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification.

II. Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

A. Review of the implementation of the Convention and of its institutional arrangements, pursuant to article 22, paragraph 2 (a) and (b), and article 26 of the Convention, and the outcome of the fifth session of the Committee on the Review of the Implementation of the Convention

3. The Committee on the Review of the Implementation of the Convention, as a standing subsidiary body to assist in its function of regularly reviewing the implementation of the Convention, was established by the fifth session of the Conference of the Parties.

4. The fifth session of the Committee met in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from 12 to 21 March 2007. The meeting reviewed the reports on implementation by affected country parties of regions other than Africa, including on the participatory process, and on experience gained and results achieved in the preparation and implementation of programmes of action. It also reviewed the reports by developed country parties on measures taken to assist in the preparation and implementation of

[a] Ibid., vol. 1954, No. 33480.

action programmes of affected country Parties of regions other than Africa, including information on financial resources they have provided, or are providing, under the Convention.

5. The Committee further reviewed information provided by relevant organs, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, as well as by other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, in respect of their activities in support of the implementation of the Convention in affected country parties of regions other than Africa. It particularly considered available information regarding the mobilization and use of financial resources and other support by multilateral agencies and institutions, with a view to enhancing their effectiveness and efficiency in respect of the achievement of the objectives of the Convention, including information on the activities of the Global Environment Facility and the Global Mechanism and its Facilitation Committee.

6. The Committee on the Review of the Implementation of the Convention discussed necessary adjustments to the elaboration process and the implementation of programmes of action, including (a) a review of the enhanced implementation of the obligations of the Convention, (b) ways and means of promoting know-how and technology transfer for combating desertification and/or mitigating the effects of drought; and (c) ways and means of promoting experience-sharing and information exchange among parties and interested institutions and organizations. It considered ways and means of improving procedures for the communication of information as well as the quality and format of reports to be submitted to the Conference of the Parties. Finally, the Committee considered the interim report on the status of celebration of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification.

7. In accordance with decision 7/COP.7, and in order to maximize the exchange of best practices, experiences and lessons learned between parties and observers, seven panel discussions were organized to cover regional and global issues as described in the thematic topics of decision 1/COP.5 and the strategic areas of decision 8/COP.4.

8. Following the provisions of decisions 1/COP.5 and 9/COP.6, the Committee reviewed available information regarding the mobilization and use of financial resources and other support by multilateral agencies and institutions. The Committee considered necessary adjustments to the elaboration process and the implementation of national action programmes, including a review of the enhanced implementation of the obligations of the Convention; ways and means of promoting know-how and technology transfer, experience-sharing and information exchange among parties and interested institutions and organizations; ways and means of improving procedures for communication of information; and the quality and format of reports to be submitted to the Conference of the Parties.

9. A global interactive dialogue was convened on investments in rural areas in the context of combating land degradation and desertification. The ensuing discussion focused on reducing poverty and called for a common direction in approaches to improving rural livelihoods and enhancing economic growth in rural areas. Country ownership, alignment, harmonization and mutual accountability with their partners should help affected country parties to exercise leadership in strengthening rural development and protecting dryland ecosystems.

10. At its fifth session, the Committee identified potential action that could be undertaken at the national, subregional, regional and international levels, after consideration and appropriate decisions by the Conference of the Parties, in conformity with the provisions of the Convention. The Committee discussed specific thematic issues pertaining to the implementation process in regions other than Africa. Recommendations were made in the following areas: participatory processes involving civil society, and non-governmental and community-based organizations; legislative and institutional frameworks or arrangements; resource mobilization and coordination, both domestic and international, including conclusions of partnership agreements; links and synergy with other environmental conventions and, as appropriate, with national development strategies; drought and desertification monitoring and assessment; early warning systems for mitigating the effects of drought; and access by affected country parties, particularly affected developing country parties, to appropriate technology, knowledge and know-how.

11. The Committee reviewed the implementation of the Convention at the global level and made recommendations in the following areas: the review process and procedures for the communication of information as well as the quality and format of reports; the efficiency and effectiveness of measures in reaching the end-users of natural resources; a synthesis of best practices, experiences and lessons learned and of ways and means to promote experience-sharing and information exchange among parties and all other interested institutions and organizations; emerging and challenging issues deriving from implementation and necessary adjustments to the elaboration process and the implementation of action programmes; and ways and means of promoting know-how and technology transfer. The Committee made specific recommendations on financing implementation of the Convention by multilateral agencies and institutions, including by the Global Environment Facility.

12. Noting that in addressing land and water issues under the Convention, a framework is essential for achieving the Millennium Development Goals and maintaining essential ecosystem services, the Committee urged that the potential offered by the Convention for a synergistic added value be recognized in the resource allocation patterns under the Global Environment Facility. The Facility was invited to strengthen the focal area of land degradation, primarily desertification and deforestation, while donors and the Global Environment Facility Council were encouraged to allocate more financial resources to land degradation in the next replenishment.

13. The Committee also noted that adaptation to climate change was high on the international agenda and recommended that the potential of the Convention to be instrumental for adaptation to climate change be recognized through adjustments to appropriate mechanisms. In that regard, Global Environment Facility was invited to facilitate access by affected country parties, particularly those in Africa, to funding mechanisms available for the implementation of projects and to programmes relating to land degradation and desertification, such as the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Special Climate Change Fund, in order to support their efforts to combat desertification, and to do likewise with the Adaptation Fund of the Kyoto Protocol should the opportunity arise.

B. Preparation for the sixteenth and seventeenth sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development

14. The General Assembly, in its resolution 61/202, underlining the importance of the issue of desertification in the process of the Commission on Sustainable Development, in particular in the context of its sixteenth and seventeenth sessions dealing with thematic clusters on agriculture, rural development, land, drought and desertification, requested the secretariat of the Commission to work closely with the secretariat of the Convention in the preparations for those sessions in the areas relevant to the Convention.

15. Consistent with resolution 61/202, the secretariats of the Convention and the Commission met to discuss modalities for collaboration in undertaking preparations for the next cycle of the Commission. The meeting took place in New York during the fifteenth session of the Commission. At that meeting, the secretariats underlined the multisectoral and cross-cutting nature of the thematic clusters. They noted the need for information-sharing in order to produce streamlined documents based on various information sources. They reached an understanding on the need to join forces to respond to various demands from Member States and other stakeholders. In that regard, they agreed to find opportunities for joint intersessional panels and side events with appropriate themes such as desertification and poverty reduction, natural resource scarcity in the drylands as a strategic issue, sustainable land management and adaptation to climate change.

16. Special reference was made to regional implementation meetings of the Commission and to meetings of regional economic commissions. Since the implementation framework of the Convention follows a regional pattern, it was understood that the secretariat of the Convention would actively contribute to the proceedings of those meetings.

C. Deliberations of the ad hoc intergovernmental intersessional working group to develop a draft 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention

17. In resolution 61/202, the Assembly welcomed the establishment of the ad hoc intergovernmental intersessional working group with the mandate to review the report of the Joint Inspection Unit in full and, building on the results of that review and other inputs, to develop a draft 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention, for submission to the Conference of the Parties at its eighth session.

18. By its decision 3/COP.7, the Conference of the Parties established an intersessional intergovernmental working group, which, inter alia, was requested to develop a 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention. In line with that decision, the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties was assigned to prepare the terms of reference of the Intersessional Intergovernmental Working Group, including a draft 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention. The Working Group was requested to complete its work by 1 June 2007, with a view to submitting its conclusion to the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention. The Working Group consisted of 18 members, comprising the President of the

Conference of the Parties, the chairs of the Committee on Science and Technology and the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention and three members of each of the five regional groups. The Working Group met four times.

19. At its first meeting, in May 2006, the Working Group considered its programme of work. In the light of the scope of its tasks and the limited time available for concluding its work, the Working Group decided to seek external assistance, subject to the availability of resources. At its second meeting, in July 2006, the Working Group further specified that it would need the assistance of a core consultancy team, consisting of at least two consultants. In addition, the Working Group considered that short-term assignments would be given to selected consultants for preparing issue papers on specific technical matters that were relevant to the development of the strategic plan and framework.

20. The Group pursued its deliberations at its third and fourth meetings, held respectively from 26 to 28 April 2007 in Windhoek and from 29 to 31 May 2007 in Geneva, Switzerland. A draft of the ten-year strategic plan and framework to enhance implementation of the Convention (2008-2018) was finalized after the Geneva meeting and is therefore ready for consideration by the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties, which will be held in Madrid from 3 to 14 September 2007.

D. Consideration of the implementation of decision 23 of the seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, pertaining to the introduction of the euro as the budget and accounting currency of the Convention

21. In its decision 23/COP.7, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention decided to introduce the euro as the budget and accounting currency from 2008-2009, and requested the Executive Secretary to report to the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties on all necessary changes in the programme and budget document. In its resolution 61/202, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General, taking into account the institutional linkage and related administrative arrangements between the Convention secretariat and the United Nations Secretariat, to facilitate the implementation of decision 23 of the seventh session of the Conference of the Parties pertaining to the introduction of the euro as the budget and accounting currency of the Convention.

22. In the oral statement made by the Secretariat before the Second Committee at its 34th meeting, in connection with draft resolution A/C.2/61/L.55, it was indicated that the introduction of the euro as the budget and accounting currency of the Convention would be a departure from the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations and, consequently, it would require detailed review by the United Nations Secretariat as to the feasibility of maintaining records in two currencies within the existing financial system of the United Nations (see A/C.2/61/SR.34).

23. Administrative services to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification are provided by the United Nations Office in Geneva in accordance with the established financial policies and procedures and the Financial Regulations and Rules. In order for the Office to provide administrative services to the

Convention, in the even that the euro is introduced as the budget and accounting currency of the Convention, it will be prohibitively expensive for the United Nations to modify its financial systems and procedures in order to accommodate the Convention's currency change.

24. In its resolution 60/283 (part II, para. 4), the Assembly decided to replace the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS) with the next generation of enterprise resource planning system or other comparable system. Hence, it would not be cost effective or productive to invest additional resources, both human and financial, in upgrading IMIS to meet any requirements. In that context, should parties wish to change to the euro as the budget and accounting currency, the Office advised that the parties' interest would be best served by having financial services more effectively and efficiently provided by another United Nations entity, one that is already using the euro as its own base currency, while committing to providing all assistance necessary to facilitate the transfer of financial assistance to another United Nations entity.

25. The former Executive Secretary of the Convention has expressed concern that the Conference of the Parties at its seventh session neither invited nor authorized the Convention secretariat to move its financial services from the Office to another organization, nor did it authorize the Convention secretariat to sever or change its other ties to either the Office or United Nations Headquarters. In that context, he further stated that it was the belief of the Convention secretariat that it would be most appropriate for it to seek again the guidance of the parties regarding the best manner to reduce the present exchange rate risks.

III. Observations and recommendations

26. The implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification since the last session of the General Assembly has advanced the Convention's process and visibility.

27. At its fifth session, the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention not only reviewed various reports but also succeeded in convening seven panel discussions and a global interactive dialogue to maximize the exchange of best practices, experiences and lessons learned between parties and observers, and to cover regional and global issues as well as several strategic areas. The Assembly may wish to lend its political support to the Committee process as a unique exercise for the dialogue and partnership building that are very much needed in the implementation of the Convention.

28. With regard to the next cycle of the Commission on Sustainable Development, it is envisaged that the core issues covered by the Convention will be a top priority in the intergovernmental processes during the next biennium, including in the ongoing debate on climate change. The Assembly may wish, in conjunction with the Conference of the Parties, to continue to provide policy guidance on that important matter. The same support is expected from the Assembly to implement the ten-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008-2018), should it be adopted by the Conference of the Parties.

29. Finally, the shift to the euro as the currency of the Convention has proven difficult to implement. At a time when currency fluctuations continue to impede the

implementation of the Convention budget, the Conference of the Parties should continue to seek a satisfactory solution, including within the framework of the institutional linkage and administrative arrangements concluded between the Assembly and the Conference of the Parties and in the context of the implementation of resolution 60/283. At the present time, it would be advisable to maintain the integrity of the institutional linkage that over the years has proved to be an asset for the Convention and its processes. Parties have more to gain than to lose in the present relationship. The Assembly may wish therefore to encourage the parties to the Convention to consider taking temporary measures to protect the Convention's budget against the negative effects of currency fluctuations. Furthermore, since the United Nations is about to shift to a new management system, reforming the outdated IMIS, Member States may wish to include in the said reform the possibility of accommodating other currencies, such as the euro.

IV. Outcome of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification

A. Introduction

30. Concerned at the exacerbation of desertification, particularly in Africa, and its far-reaching implications for the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, the General Assembly, by its resolution 58/211, declared the year 2006 as the International Year of Deserts and Desertification. The Year would serve as a means to raise public awareness on the issue of desertification and to protect the biological diversity of deserts as well as the traditional knowledge of communities affected by desertification.

31. The present report assesses the outcomes of a wide range of events and activities that took place to celebrate the International Year of Deserts and Desertification. It concludes that the Year offered an important opportunity to increase awareness of desertification at the global level, while fostering the development of stakeholder networks and contributing to the long-term implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. However, to carry forward the momentum generated by the Year, it is imperative that appropriate follow-up action take place.

32. At its sixtieth session, the Assembly adopted resolution 60/200, requesting the Secretary-General to report to it at its sixty-second session on the celebration of the Year.

B. Objectives of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification

33. The decision of the General Assembly to observe an international year dedicated to deserts and desertification provided an opportunity to highlight the issue of drylands on the international environmental agenda, while also providing a timely reminder to the international community of the immense challenges that still lie ahead. The International Year of Deserts and Desertification was also intended to address the issue of deserts as unique natural habitats that have been home to some of the world's oldest civilizations.

34. The celebration of the Year was conceived with a view to achieving a set of concrete and measurable objectives, represented by the acronym LAND:

(a) Long-term oriented implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification;

(b) Awareness of the implications of desertification;

(c) Networking with all stakeholders;

(d) Dissemination of information relating to the Convention.

C. Celebrations of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification

35. The General Assembly and the Conference of the Parties encouraged country parties and observers to celebrate the International Year of Deserts and Desertification worldwide, and the secretariat of the Convention, in cooperation with its bilateral and institutional partners, including the International Year of Deserts and Desertification inter-agency committee, organized a number of major international events.

36. Further global communication initiatives undertaken included broadcasts by media such as the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), the Voice of America and Deutsche Welle. In addition, the Science and Development Network (SciDevNet) commissioned scientific experts to prepare the *Desert Science* dossier (available from http://www.scidev.net).

1. Celebrations and events

37. Prior to the start of 2006, the Executive Secretary of the Convention requested information on national level activities that parties intended to organize to celebrate the Year, and 54 parties confirmed their participation. At the end of 2006, the secretariat invited the parties and observers to report on those activities. By the end of May 2007, information had been received on activities in 31 countries, which was useful in identifying priorities addressed at the national level. National events were grouped into three categories, as follows:

(a) Conferences, workshops, seminars and symposiums, including academic lectures, science seminars, round-table discussions, forums and press conferences;

(b) Public information and awareness-raising events, including exhibition stands, postcards, posters, booklets, literature, maps, the "This land is your land" information pack, civil society networking events, media coverage, study tours, teaching kits, training for teachers on desertification, e-learning programmes, world days and tree plantings;

(c) Cultural events, including museum, gallery and photographic exhibitions, musical events, plays, film festivals, commemorative stamps, calendars, websites, desertification-themed lottery tickets, and photographic and writing competitions.

2. Key outputs and achievements of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification

38. Many of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification events requested the Conference of the Parties, the secretariat and other stakeholders to give due

consideration to follow-up initiatives. Outputs from the conferences organized in Bamako on youth and desertification (4-6 September 2006) and in Beijing on women and desertification (29 May-1 June 2006) specifically requested the Conference of the Parties to consider their conclusions with a view to implementing the respective recommendations. At the end of the Joint International Conference on Desertification and the International Policy Imperative, held in Algiers from 17 to 19 December 2006, an agreement was signed by the Ministry of Urban Planning, the Environment and Tourism of Algeria, the United Nations University, the United Nations Environment Programme and the secretariats of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the Convention on Biological Diversity[b] on strengthening the collaboration of those institutions in combating desertification. The agreement also referred to a possible decade of deserts and desertification (2010-2020).

39. International Year of Deserts and Desertification events also yielded outputs, which, if acted upon, could enhance the multiplier effect of the Year at the national and international levels. They focused on a variety of core themes, such as women and young people, desertification-induced food insecurity and migration, and the like.

D. Recommendations to strengthen existing aspects of the Convention implementation process

1. Enhancing participation and empowerment

40. It was regarded as necessary to engage the participation of land users, Governments, regional and international bodies, non-governmental organizations, civil society, communities and the private sector, and to acknowledge that desertification-affected dryland dwellers must be at the centre of any engagement. It was further deemed necessary to formulate strategies to reduce the vulnerability of such social groups as women and youth and to involve farmers and populations of arid zones in the formulation of public policies that have a direct impact on them and on their livelihoods.

2. Enhancing the role of civil society and non-governmental organizations and networking

41. It was recommended that a viable system be set up to reinforce the active contribution of civil society to reducing the impacts of desertification, and Governments and cooperation agencies were invited to support existing youth networks involved in environmental and sustainable development. The establishment and strengthening of local women's organizations was advocated in order to enhance women's participation in decision-making, while the importance of taking a holistic approach involving all stakeholders was emphasized in order to gain full benefit from research and knowledge-sharing.

3. Scientific research, training and consensus

42. The need for multidisciplinary research on dryland policy options and consequences was identified, including land tenure issues, drought preparedness and

[b] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1760, No. 30619.

mitigation, soil and water resource management and the value of ecosystem services. There was also a call for better communication and sharing of scientific knowledge across the spectrum of stakeholders. It was further recommended that Governments and multilateral environmental agreements should integrate science into policymaking at all levels, while the scientific assessment of land degradation in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas should be linked to efforts to adapt to the adverse effects of climate variability and/or climate change.

4. Concerns and requests for long-term implementation of the Convention

43. A peer review mechanism in the implementation of the Convention was recommended, as well as improved interaction of the Convention with other development partners and national Governments, which would enable the Convention to champion better policies at the international level. The Convention secretariat was also asked to establish a focal point for youth and a Convention youth partnership network. Governments of country parties were requested to introduce more substance to sessions of the Conference of the Parties and meetings of the Committee on the Review of the Implementation of the Convention, and the Intersessional Intergovernmental Working Group was encouraged to take fully into consideration the recommendations of the Beijing International Conference on Women and Desertification and the Bamako International Conference on Youth and Desertification.

5. Indicators and targets

44. There was recognition of the need for better harmonization of information at various levels, together with the standardization of definitions, indicators and monitoring procedures. The identification of a limited number of clear, legally binding targets for implementation of the Convention was also seen as important. They would be based, inter alia, on past work of the Committee on Science and Technology and on a review of selected success stories and/or failures of campaigns against desertification and the effects of drought.

6. National action programmes

45. Concern was expressed about the serious delays in implementing national action programmes to combat desertification, and there were calls upon those countries that had not yet finished formulating their national action programmes to do so. There were also calls upon parties to incorporate a gender dimension in the implementation of their national action programmes and in other relevant frameworks or environmental strategies.

46. Governments were requested to raise their national action programmes to the strategic framework level and mainstream advanced efforts to combat desertification. In view of recurrent droughts and their impacts on local communities, it was seen as important to develop and implement a national drought policy that supported effective implementation of the national action programmes. Country parties were also requested to identify the mechanisms to enhance participation of young people in the implementation of national action programmes.

7. Resources and financing

47. It was suggested that new funding opportunities and financial instruments could be created through the development of public-private and community partnerships, while donor countries were invited to support initiatives using microcredit tools.

48. Furthermore, donor countries and international agencies, particularly the Global Environment Facility, should be called upon to provide additional funds on a regular basis as a way of improving participation (particularly of women) in the decision-making process within the implementation of the Convention. It was also suggested that the private sector should be provided with economic incentives to better invest in efforts to combat desertification.

E. Outcomes focusing on cross-cutting themes already considered within the Convention but which must continue to be mainstreamed

49. The cross-cutting themes include, in particular, the following: synergy and interlinkages, traditional knowledge, water, renewable energy, culture and education, alternative employment opportunities, access to markets and sustainable livelihoods. For further details on the priority cross-cutting areas of gender (women) and youth, please refer to the Beijing Statement of the International Conference on Women and Desertification and the Bamako Declaration of the International Conference on Youth and Desertification (see final report, chap. II) (available from http://www.unccd.int).

1. Synergy and interlinkages

50. There was a recognition of the need for scientific studies examining the linkages between desertification, biodiversity loss and climate change, while innovative and adaptive land management responses to inherent climatic variability and natural hazards (droughts, floods, landslides, sand and dust storms, wildfires and so on) must be identified and implemented for sustainable land management.

2. Traditional knowledge

51. A greater appreciation of the role of traditional knowledge was advocated, in addition to the recognition that combining traditional knowledge with scientific knowledge and new tools provides policymakers with crucial information. In that context, the Convention and the country parties were requested to strengthen the integration of local traditional knowledge with modern scientific approaches to combat desertification.

3. Culture and education

52. The promotion of education and the dissemination of information in areas affected by drought and desertification was recommended, as well as the inclusion of environmental and sustainable development as subjects in the curricula of schools. In that regard, specialized education facilities on combating desertification should be created, and an international system of fellowships and/or internships established on issues relating to desertification, supported by the private sector.

4. Water

53. It was recognized that managing water scarcity not only contributes towards reducing land degradation and desertification in fragile ecosystems characterized by structural water shortages, but also helps to attain the Millennium Development Goals, while knowledge of water management approaches is crucial to formulating policies for development of drylands. It was further noted that desert drylands provide opportunities for sustainable livelihoods that do not depend on the land's primary productivity but exploit such desert attributes as winter warmth, brackish geothermal water and high solar irradiation.

5. Renewable energy

54. It was advocated that non-governmental organizations disseminate information on alternative energy sources and that the potential of the drylands should be explored in order to provide such alternative energy sources as solar, wind and biofuel.

6. Alternative employment opportunities, access to markets and sustainable livelihoods

55. Alternative employment opportunities and sustainable livelihoods for pastoralists and other land users in the drylands need to be created to diminish pressure on natural resources, while income-generating activities should be encouraged based on the development of renewable energies and activities such as ecotourism. It was also suggested that Governments should be asked to set up coherent policies on international trade in order to allow equitable access of dryland products to the markets.

F. Outputs from International Year of Deserts and Desertification events identifying new and emerging cross-sectoral issues that require attention within the Convention process

56. Emerging cross-sectoral issues that require attention within the Convention process include the areas of health, food security, environmental security, migration and environmental refugees and ecosystem goods and services. Selected outcomes from the deliberations at International Year of Deserts and Desertification events are described below.

1. Health

57. It was recommended that health indicators, such as maternal diseases, child nutrition, family planning and the like be considered in the Convention reporting process. There should be a recognition of the negative effects of HIV/AIDS on communities living in areas affected by desertification and drought, particularly on women, leading to further land degradation and poverty, and of the need to explore effective strategies to diminish that negative impact through joint efforts promoting women's active involvement. Health risks could be anticipated and prevented by strengthening the capacity for resistance of both the population and the food sector, through immunization, palm production and the planting of drought-tolerant crops with higher nutritional qualities. To reduce maternal and child mortality, adequate

reproductive health facilities for women should be provided in areas affected by drought and desertification.

2. Food security

58. The concept of food sovereignty for the world's arid zones, which advocates local agricultural production to feed the local population, should be recognized. Furthermore, greater consideration should be given to the increasing convergence between human rights, the right to food and sustainable environmental management, with emphasis on the prevention and anticipation of food insecurity in the drylands. The use of multipurpose trees and crops for the production of medicines and food of high nutritive value, based on traditional knowledge, should be promoted. A specific study should also be carried out on the nutritional capacity of products from areas affected by drought and desertification and on ways and means of improving the nutritional status of the younger generation, taking into consideration existing research in the field.

3. Environmental security, migration and environmental refugees

59. Comprehensive policies should be adopted to ensure the full involvement, particularly of young people, in natural resource management to encourage them to remain on their land, while activities in affected areas should be supported in order to avoid forced migration. A more in-depth analysis of the definition of environmental migration is needed, as well as an analysis of the causes and consequences of migration and the recognition of environmental refugees under international law and of their right to food. Furthermore, a conceptual framework for desertification and migration is needed, and an international expert panel should be established to help mitigate the effects of desertification and migration.

4. Ecosystem goods and services, their valuation and the costs of inaction

60. It was recognized that those people involved in the conservation and protection of resources should benefit from payment for environmental services. Consequently the Committee on Science and Technology and the Committee on the Review of the Implementation of the Convention were called upon to urgently contribute to reaching a scientific consensus, in time for the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, on the causes and symptoms of desertification and future outlooks. There was a recognition of the need to evaluate the costs and benefits of combating desertification, including ecosystem services, based on quantifiable targets and on estimates of the cost of inaction. The need for research and methods to better document the full costs of dryland degradation, particularly the losses of ecological goods and services, was also emphasized, as well as the need to quantify the substantial benefits that could accrue from the sustainable rehabilitation and development of those lands. It was acknowledged that investment in drylands is economically, socially and environmentally profitable and judicious, and should be underpinned by appropriate legislation, land tenure security, price stability, education and health care.

G. Conclusion and recommendations

61. **Despite the extensive progress made towards meeting the objectives of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification, desertification remains an important global problem, especially in relation to its far-reaching implications for the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, in particular Goal 1 on the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger and Goal 7 on ensuring environmental sustainability. If undertaken appropriately, such follow-up action could have beneficial collateral effects in contributing to goals 3, 4 and 8. It is therefore of paramount importance that appropriate follow-up action take place at all levels to build on the momentum generated through the Year, through the promotion of further political engagement, advocacy and awareness-raising in the context of the Convention.**

62. **The General Assembly may wish to consider the following recommendations that were identified at the relevant events organized during the celebration of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification and relate to seven main core priority areas, as follows:**

(a) **A commitment from stakeholders for management and restoration of degraded drylands:**

(i) **From partner organizations to the Convention (including the organizations of the United Nations system), financial institutions (including the Global Environment Facility), resource mobilizers (including the Global Mechanism) and parties, to increase the level and diversity of funding available to combat desertification and implement the Convention, through predictable and sufficient resources;**

(ii) **From the scientific community, to make research findings relevant to end-users and understandable to all stakeholders;**

(iii) **From civil society and non-governmental organizations, to give priority to drylands and combating desertification in their efforts to implement multilateral environmental agreements;**

(b) **Formulating and implementing supportive policies and appropriate legal frameworks:**

(i) **To improve interaction of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification with development partners and the other Rio Conventions,[a] and to forge new relationships with organizations addressing such emerging cross-cutting issues as food security, health, migration and human rights;**

(ii) **To mainstream the priorities of national action programmes in national development frameworks, in conjunction with clear targets and indicators to monitor progress;**

[a] The three Rio Conventions are the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa; the Convention on Biological Diversity; and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

(iii) To encourage countries that have not yet finished formulating their national action programmes to do so with urgency;

(c) Empowering local people and marginalized groups, particularly women and young people, and ensuring the equitable sharing of costs and benefits:

(i) Strengthening the role of women, young people and populations of arid zones in decision-making, participatory processes and efforts to implement the Convention and consolidation of multi-stakeholder networks developed during the International Year of Deserts and Desertification, particularly between non-governmental organizations, women, young people, farmers and scientists, while providing the resources to ensure their sustainability;

(ii) Disseminating research among different stakeholder groups on the full environmental, social and economic cost of dryland degradation with a view to developing strategies for intervention;

(d) Integrated approaches to resource assessment, planning and management, taking into consideration the links between desertification and such emerging cross-sectoral issues as migration, environmental security, health, water, renewable energies and food insecurity:

(i) Rights-based approaches to such emerging cross-sectoral issues as food security, access to water and migration;

(ii) Exploration of, and investment in, the less well-known opportunities provided by the drylands, particularly in respect of renewable energies and alternative livelihoods;

(iii) Improved communication between stakeholders to reduce the duplication of effort;

(e) Taking an adaptive and holistic approach to dryland management, emphasizing environmental, social and cultural values as well as traditional knowledge:

(i) Making a commitment to integrated water, forest and land resource management, capitalizing on the information in the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment[d] and fostering synergy with other multilateral environmental agreements;

(ii) Further promoting education and the dissemination of information in dryland areas affected by desertification, building on the progress made during the International Year of Deserts and Desertification and incorporating different social and cultural values and traditional knowledge;

(iii) Responding innovatively to natural dryland hazards, including droughts, floods, sandstorms, and the like, engaging all stakeholders, capitalizing on traditional coping strategies and scientific knowledge, and ensuring the timely review and revision of management goals;

[d] See http://www.millenniumassessment.org.

(f) Promoting economic efficiency and financial viability:

(i) Agreement on a limited number of clear targets for implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, including quantifiable objectives and time frames to monitor progress and evaluate the "value for money" from investment in efforts to combat desertification;

(ii) Exploration of innovative approaches to enhance resources and maximize the efficiency of bilateral and multilateral development instruments. Such approaches could include debt swaps and public-private and community partnerships;

(iii) Documentation of the full costs of degradation and inaction at national, regional and international levels, together with quantification of the economic benefits and profits that could accrue from the sustainable rehabilitation and development of drylands;

(g) Assuring participatory monitoring and evaluation as a basis for adaptive management:

(i) Greater participation of those stakeholders affected by desertification (particularly indigenous groups, women, young people and the poor) in defining problems and in implementing policies and projects;

(ii) Recognition of the benefits of combining traditional and scientific knowledge to address local needs in combating desertification effectively.

Annex III

Report of the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 61/204 of 20 December 2006, the General Assembly invited the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity to continue reporting on the ongoing work of the Convention, including its Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.[a] The present report has been prepared in response to that invitation. As at 31 July 2007, a total of 190 States and the European Union were a party to the Convention, and the Cartagena Protocol had been ratified by 141 States.

II. Overview of major developments

A. Group of Eight Summit in Heiligendamm, and the Potsdam Initiative: Biological Diversity 2010

2. For the first time in its history, the Summit of the Group of Eight, discussed the challenges of biodiversity. By adopting the Declaration on Growth and Responsibility in the World Economy (para. 61) in June 2007, the leaders of the Group of Eight Summit in Heiligendamm agreed to increase their efforts for the protection and sustainable use of biodiversity to achieve the 2010 biodiversity target,[b] aimed at reducing significantly the current rate of biodiversity loss. They also acknowledged the Potsdam Initiative: Biological Diversity 2010, launched in March 2007 by the ministers of the environment of the Group of Eight and of Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa. The Potsdam Initiative, involving five diverse countries, revolves around 10 concrete activities to help achieve the 2010 biodiversity target adopted in Johannesburg at the World Summit on Sustainable Development and reiterated by the 2005 World Summit in its outcome document (resolution 60/1). The Potsdam Initiative recognizes that biodiversity and climate change are intertwined and that more efforts are needed to address biodiversity and climate change issues together coherently. Furthermore, the Potsdam Initiative was one of the recommendations submitted by the eminent experts meeting, which was also held in Potsdam from 13 to 15 December 2006, with the participation of the Executive Secretary of the Convention, to brainstorm on the preparations for the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to be held in Bonn, Germany, from 19 to 30 May 2008.

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[a] UNEP/CBD/ExCOP/1/3 and Corr.1, part two, annex.

[b] See Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

B. South-South cooperation

3. At the request of the President of the Group of 77 in New York, a brainstorming meeting on the preparation of a multi-year plan of action on South-South cooperation for the implementation of the three objectives[c] of the Convention was convened in Montreal from 6 to 8 November 2006. The brainstorming meeting, organized in partnership with the Secretariat of the Group of 77, made recommendations on the elaboration of a framework for South-South cooperation for the implementation of the Convention in which the participants agreed on objectives, possible programme areas, mechanisms and management arrangements. The event offered an opportunity for the convening, for the first time, of an exchange of experiences between the secretariats of the Central Africa Forests Commission (COMIFAC), the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. The meeting of the secretariats of the entities concerned with the three major hydrological and forest basins of the world was convened in Montreal in response to the request of the President of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment. That initiative was welcomed by the forty-first Meeting of the Chairpersons/Coordinators of the Group of 77 chapters, held in Rome, from 26 to 27 February 2007.

C. Cities and biodiversity

4. At the initiative of the Mayor of Curitiba, Brazil, Carlos Alberto Richa, a meeting on Cities and Biodiversity: Achieving the 2010 Biodiversity Target was held from 26 to 28 March 2007. The participants representing 34 mayors adopted the Curitiba Declaration on Cities and Biodiversity, which will be submitted to the ninth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biodiversity, together with the results of the municipal pre-conference to be held in Bonn in May 2008. To that end, a steering committee comprising the mayors of the following cities was established: Bonn, Germany; Curitiba, Brazil; Montreal, Canada; Nagoya, Japan; and Johannesburg, South Africa. The Curitiba meeting was prepared and serviced by an inter-agency task force chaired by the Executive Secretary, comprising the following organizations: UNEP, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Conservation Union, the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives and the University College London (UCL) Environment Institute. As a result of the initiative, the secretariat has established a web page aimed at promoting best practices and disseminating lessons learned (see http://www.cbd.int/authorities/default.shtml).

D. Biodiversity and climate change

5. At the initiative of the Bureau of the twelfth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, and in collaboration with the

[c] The three objectives are as follows: the conservation of biological diversity; the sustainable use of its components; and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources.

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a round table meeting on the interlinkages between biodiversity and climate change was held from 19 to 20 March 2007, at the headquarters of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The expert meeting considered the relevance of the work of the Panel to the implementation of the programmes of work of the Convention and the cross-cutting issues on climate change and biodiversity. A message was adopted on climate change and biodiversity, which highlighted an implementation deficit concerning activities that link biodiversity and climate change mitigation and adaptation, and included a list of specific considerations for possible areas for further action as well as general views on emerging issues, such as reducing emissions from deforestation in developing countries and biofuels. In collaboration with the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention on Wetlands),[d] the secretariat convened, in March 2007 in Gland, Switzerland, a meeting on climate change and wetlands. In addition, in collaboration with the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, a meeting on deforestation and climate change was convened in Rome, Italy, on 17 March 2007, immediately following the eighteenth session of the Committee on Forestry of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. The publication entitled *Guidance for Promoting Synergy among Activities Addressing Biological Diversity, Desertification, Land Degradation and Climate Change*,[e] based on the work of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Biodiversity and Climate Change, was launched at the margins of the high-level segment of the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in November 2006 in Nairobi, Kenya.

E. International Day for Biological Diversity

6. The International Day for Biological Diversity was celebrated on 22 May 2007 under the theme "Biodiversity and climate change". In 2007, an unprecedented number of Parties marked the Day by organizing a series of events based on the written and visual materials that were prepared by the secretariat with the financial support of Norway. For the first time, an inter-agency task force, comprising the representatives of the relevant agencies, was established to prepare for this major event. The task force was also assigned to prepare for the International Year of Biodiversity, 2010 (resolution 61/203). The secretariat organized a high-level event at the Montreal Botanical Garden, with the participation of federal and provincial ministers, the Mayor of Montreal, the executive secretaries of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, representatives from the diplomatic corps and several high-level officials from Canada. More than 300 participants were also present for the ceremony. In addition, the secretariat used the occasion to launch its new website (http://www.cbd.int), and the Convention on Biological Diversity Linnaeus Lecture Series. A high-level celebration was held at UNEP headquarters in Nairobi, with the participation of the Executive Director of UNEP and Nobel Peace Prize winner Wangari Maathai. All regional offices of UNEP also celebrated the Day in their respective duty stations.

[d] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 996, No. 14583.

[e] Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Technical Series No. 25 (Montreal, Quebec, Canada, 2006).

III. Overview of the outcome of meetings held since the submission of the previous report

A. Meeting of the Group of Technical Experts on an internationally recognized certificate of origin/source/legal provenance

7. The meeting of the Group of Technical Experts on an internationally recognized certificate of origin/source/legal provenance, held in Lima, Peru, from 22 to 25 January 2007, was convened in the context of the ongoing negotiations on an international regime on access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing. The Group successfully addressed the four main items of its terms of reference: (a) the possible rationale, the objectives and the need for an internationally recognized certificate of origin/source/legal provenance; (b) potential characteristics and features of different options of such an internationally recognized certificate; (c) distinctions between the options of certificate of origin/source/legal provenance and the implications of each of the options for achieving the objectives of articles 15 and 8(j) of the Convention; and (d) associated implementation challenges, including the practicality, feasibility, costs and benefits of the different options, as well as mutual supportiveness and compatibility with the Convention and other international agreements. The Group considered a number of potential characteristics and features of a certificate system, which will provide a useful basis for future discussions by the Ad hoc Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit Sharing. The recommendations of the experts will therefore be submitted to the fifth meeting of the Working Group, which will be held in October 2007, to negotiate an international regime on access and benefit-sharing.

B. Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group of Legal and Technical Experts on Liability and Redress in the Context of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety

8. The third meeting of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group of Legal and Technical Experts on Liability and Redress in the Context of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, was held in Montreal from 19 to 23 February 2007. The Working Group continued to elaborate options for the elements of rules and procedures referred to in article 27 of the Protocol and considered information put together by the Secretariat on the identified topics, as well as expert presentations regarding (a) tools for valuation of biodiversity; (b) financial security to cover liability for damage resulting from transboundary movements of living modified organisms; and (c) transnational procedures. The participants recommended, in respect of international rules and procedures in the field of liability and redress for damage resulting from transboundary movement of living modified organisms, the future elements and structure of a possible decision of the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to be held in Bonn, Germany, in May 2008.

C. Advisory Group for the programme of work on article 8(j) and related provisions

9. The second meeting of the Advisory Group for the programme of work on article 8(j) and related provisions was held in Montreal, Canada, from 30 April to 3 May 2007. The Group considered the preparation of the fifth meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Intersessional Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions to be held in Montréal from 15 to 19 October 2007. The participants discussed the status of traditional knowledge, related trends and factors that may threaten the maintenance, preservation and application of traditional knowledge relevant to biological diversity. They also considered the vulnerabilities of indigenous and local communities to climate change and other threats, such as desertification and pollution, and the effects of those threats on voluntarily isolated communities. The impact of climate change on indigenous and local communities was also discussed.

D. Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice

10. The twelfth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice was held in Paris at the headquarters of UNESCO from 2 to 6 July 2007 with the participation of 465 experts. The opening ceremony of was attended by Jean-Louis Borloo, the Minister of State of France, by the Director-General of UNESCO and by Nicolas Hulot. For the first time, the Subsidiary Body discussed, under a distinct agenda item, new and emerging scientific issues of relevance to its mandate. Under that item, the meeting considered the issues of biodiversity and biofuels. Recommendations on the procedure for the future identification and consideration of emerging issues were also adopted. The consideration of emerging issues was part of a series of innovative procedures introduced during the meeting aimed at enhancing the scientific underpinning of the Subsidiary Body. The innovative procedure was adopted at a meeting of the Bureau of the Subsidiary Body held in Paris in July 2006, following a brainstorming session with former, present and future chairs of the Subsidiary Body. In accordance with its agreed workplan, the Subsidiary Body undertook an in-depth review of the implementation of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation. It considered also the findings of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment on the work under the Convention and identified lessons learned from the preparation of the second edition of *Global Biodiversity Outlook*,[f] finalized in 2006, with a view to enhancing the quality and relevance of the third edition to be prepared well in advance of the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, to be held in 2010. Moreover, the meeting recommended the adoption of guidance on strengthening the assessment of the 2010 biodiversity target in dry and sub-humid lands and identified proposals for land-use options that promote biodiversity and generate income for indigenous and local communities. It also identified proposals for the integration of climate change activities within the programmes of work of the Convention, options for mutually supportive actions addressing climate change within the Rio Conventions, and agreed on a summary of the findings of the global assessment on peatlands, biodiversity and climate change. The twelfth meeting of the Subsidiary Body was preceded, on 1 July 2007, by a meeting of the Chairs of the scientific advisory

[f] Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (Montreal, Canada, 2006).

bodies of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the Convention on Biological Diversity and other biodiversity-related conventions and the chairperson of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel of the Global Environment Facility, with the participation of the Executive Secretaries of the relevant conventions. It offered an opportunity, for the first time, to discuss collaboration among the scientific bodies of biodiversity-related Conventions. It was agreed that the second meeting of the Chairs would be held in Bonn, in May 2008, in conjunction with the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The twelfth meeting of the Subsidiary Body was preceded by a training session organized by the Secretariat, in collaboration with the Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle in Paris, on behalf of the Convention on Biological Diversity Consortium of Scientific Partners on Biodiversity.

E. Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention

11. The second meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention was held in Paris at the headquarters of UNESCO from 9 to 13 July 2007. More than 310 participants attended the meeting, which was preceded by a training workshop on national biodiversity strategies and action plans organized by GEF, UNEP and UNDP. It was also preceded by a meeting of the Bureau of the eighth Conference of the Parties, and chaired by the Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations Environment Programme, Antônio José Rezende de Castro, which included, for the first time, a dialogue with the Chief Executive Officer and Chairperson of the Global Environment Facility. That meeting was followed by a high-level dialogue with the Chief Executive Officer and Chairperson of the Global Environment Facility and all the participants, on 9 July. The second meeting of the Working Group adopted recommendations on streamlining the guidance to GEF and recommended the adoption of a four-year (2010-2014) framework for programme priorities related to the utilization of GEF resources for biodiversity, coinciding with the fifth replenishment of GEF. To that end, a dialogue among the parties, with the participation of the Chief Executive Officer and Chairperson of the GEF, will be convened on 17 May 2008, immediately before the ninth session of the Conference of the Parties. The meeting also considered options and a draft strategy for resource mobilization in support of the implementation of the Convention and recommended that a message to the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus, to be held in Doha in 2008, be prepared and transmitted by the President of the ninth session of the Conference of the Parties. The meeting also considered the implementation of goals 2 and 3 of the strategic plan of the Convention adopted by the sixth session of the Conference of the Parties. So far, 147 countries have prepared their national strategies and action plans, and 12 parties have undertaken their revisions. The second meeting of the Working Group reviewed the experience gained on the development and implementation of national strategies and plans and called on parties that had not done so to develop them as soon as possible and preferably before 2010. The meeting also considered the mainstreaming of biodiversity into the development sector, including in the One United Nations programme. It also identified areas for capacity-building and access to and transfer of technology. Under the item on the

operations of the Convention, the meeting recommended steps for admitting qualified bodies and agencies, whether governmental or non-governmental, as observers to meetings of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies.

IV. Cooperation with other conventions, international organizations and initiatives

A. Cooperation with other conventions, international organizations and initiatives

12. Pursuant to decision VIII/16 of the Conference of the Parties, efforts to strengthen cooperation with other conventions, international organizations and initiatives have been enhanced. The fifth meeting of the Liaison Group of the Biodiversity-related conventions was held in Gland, Switzerland, on 14 September 2006, and the seventh meeting of the Joint Liaison Group of the three Rio Conventions was held in Bonn, on 7 June 2007. A joint work programme between the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and the Convention on Biological Diversity was finalized. An enhanced letter of intent with the Information and Communication Centre of the Barcelona Convention was signed on 12 March 2007. The letter of intent establishes a collaborative partnership between the two institutions on a number of initiatives and activities related to their respective mandate, in particular to the achievement of the 2010 biodiversity target. On 28 March 2007, at the closure of the meeting on Cities and Biodiversity: Achieving the 2010 Biodiversity Target, held in Curitiba, Brazil, a memorandum of cooperation with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research was signed with the aim of further enhancing cooperation and of helping parties to the Convention to respond to their capacity-building needs within the framework of their efforts towards achieving the 2010 biodiversity target. A memorandum of understanding with the Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany was signed in Berlin on 5 June 2007. A memorandum of understanding with Countdown 2010 was signed in Brussels on 11 June 2007. A memorandum of understanding with the World Conservation Union was signed on 11 July 2007 in Paris, on the mainstreaming of biodiversity into the European development agencies. A memorandum of understanding was signed in Nairobi in February 2007 with Portugal and the Secretariat of the New Partnership for Africa's Development. A memorandum of understanding was signed with Wangari Maathai, aimed at minimizing the environmental impact of the secretariat processes.

B. Heads of Agencies Task Force on the 2010 biodiversity target

13. The first meeting of the Heads of Agencies Task Force on the 2010 biodiversity target was held on 15 September 2006. Taking place at the headquarters of the World Conservation Union in Gland, Switzerland, the meeting was attended by the initial signatories, including, in addition to the Union, UNEP, UNCTAD, UNDP, the World Wildlife Fund, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora,[g] Biodiversity International and the

[g] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1651, No. 28395.

Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, and were joined by the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals[b] and UNITAR, which officially signed the memorandum of cooperation between agencies to support the achievement of the 2010 biodiversity target at the meeting. FAO and UNESCO, also represented at the meeting, initiated a request to their respective governing bodies to join the Task Force. The participants collectively agreed (a) to promote the integration of the 2010 biodiversity target into the Millennium Development Goals as a way of mainstreaming biodiversity into economic sectors and related work on indicators; (b) to make use of communication, education, public awareness and outreach to increase understanding about biodiversity and the 2010 target as a key component of capacity development; and (c) to increase inter-agency collaboration on specific issues.

C. Steering Committee of the Consortium of Scientific Partners on Biodiversity

14. The first meeting of the Steering Committee of the Consortium of Scientific Partners on Biodiversity was held at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Kew, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, on 8 to 9 September 2006. A major outcome of the meeting was a set of activities based on the comparative advantage of the institutions involved in supporting the work programmes of the Convention on Biological Diversity. On 22 February 2007, the Montreal Nature Museums were linked to the Steering Committee of the Consortium by a memorandum of understanding signed between the City of Montreal and the secretariat. The memorandum of understanding establishes a formal framework for collaboration and exchange, aimed at developing and providing training programmes on strategic, technical or scientific issues for the effective implementation of the Convention.

D. International Civil Aviation Organization

15. A memorandum of understanding with the International Civil Aviation Organization was signed on 19 February 2007. The agreement formalizes the relationship and cooperation between the Convention on Biological Diversity and the International Civil Aviation Organization, in the latter's capacity as the lead United Nations agency in Montreal, which had existed on an ad hoc basis since the establishment of the secretariat in Montreal in 1996.

V. Recommendations

16. **The General Assembly may wish, inter alia:**

(a) **To take note of the report of the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, as submitted by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its sixty-second session;**

(b) **To urge Governments that have not acceded to the Convention and its Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to consider doing so as soon as possible;**

[b] Ibid., vol. 993, No. 14537.

(c) To call upon parties and other Governments to enhance their efforts to achieve the 2010 biodiversity target, and to that end:

(i) Reaffirm the importance of the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, to be held in Bonn from 12 to 16 May 2008, and the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to be held in Bonn from 19 to 30 May 2008, as well as its high-level segment on 28-30 May 2008;

(ii) Also reaffirm the importance of finalizing negotiations on the international regime on access and benefit-sharing as soon as possible and no later than 2010;

(iii) Invite parties, other Governments and relevant international organizations to celebrate in 2010 the International Year of Biodiversity;

(iv) Welcome the convening of the first meeting of the Chairs of the scientific advisory bodies of the biodiversity-related Conventions and the Rio Conventions aimed at enhancing scientific and technical collaboration for achieving the 2010 biodiversity target;

(v) Invite the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity to continue reporting to the General Assembly on the ongoing work regarding the Convention and its Protocol.